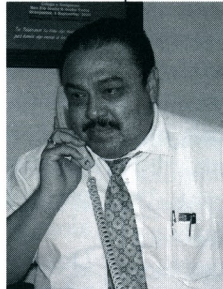


An Interdependent Relationship: Mass Media and Business

By Victor (Toko) Winklaar

The importance of a good relationship between the business and media sectors has transformed into something unique and a great necessity for both parties. The manner in which commerce has grown in Aruba and how it will continue to grow in the future, made the relationship between these two sectors continue to develop into something which can be even considered as an intimate relationship.

More and more, does the business sector depend on good media and so does the media on the business



sector, to continue executing the function it has towards the interest of the community as well as that of the commercial sector. Commerce depends greatly on serious and effective communication media in assisting this sector in reaching the community

and the press depends greatly nowadays on a good support from commerce, to continue executing its important function in the community of informing, educating and socializing the community.

Nevertheless, during the past years for the commerce as well as the press, things have not developed too positively, since the common interest which both wish to achieve as part of the community of Aruba, is being affected by certain unpleasant and not too positive developments. Developments that are not only dangerous for the interest of both groups, but also to the discomfort of the entire community.

Even though to achieve a strong position against this negative development, a positive mentality is necessary, this is not always found in

both groups. The mass media can be very aggressive and destructive when they want to, while commerce from their side can be less aggressive, but its destructive power towards the press can even be worse.

To achieve media which serve the interest of the entire community, commerce should fix its position directed towards this goal also. Nowadays in the commercial sector one can observe that there is a certain reserve when action should be taken against negative and destructive media that does not serve the interests of the business sector, nor the press and most importantly the community.

During the past years the public of Aruba on several occasions has been submitted to negative and destructive mass media output where sacred professional laws (ethics) are violated and which are opposite to the overall interest of the community. Media have to make a change, changing the negative influence nowadays, since their influence on the community is great and in this aspect the business sector has a big responsibility. Something destructive and negative cannot be supported and the media

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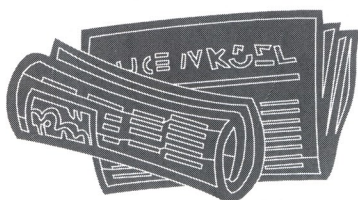
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not contributing something significant towards the development of a community, can neither be supported.

Undoubtedly the important aspect of the intimate relationship between commerce and the press, does not necessarily mean that in this alliance everything is acceptable. The media's service to commerce should be impeccable, but on the other hand its responsibility in serving the interest of the community should not be in the second place with regards to commerce. To understand this, it is indisputable that commerce should be aware of its responsibility as a source and an example/role model in the community. And if this is not the case, the same media - being a partner in the intimate relationship with commerce - have the obligation on behalf of the community to condemn and criticize this even more. It is not a question of lack of respect or loyalty, but in such a situation the public's loyalty from both sides comes in the first place.



Just like it shows that commerce should not support negative and destructive media, the press on the other hand should not support a good that is bad and a bad that is good.

Lately, sadly enough, the press has had some bitter experience showing the incorrect mentality of the commercial sector and to top it off with persons at the head of state-

owned businesses, hence of the community. Here people having a prominent role in the commercial sector misuse their power by trying to intimidate one or more of the media. Here we can specifically indicate a case of the director of a public utility company, who did not agree with us publishing information based on verified information of his involvement with a business in Venezuela. Result of this correct publication was a boycott on the part of the Director against one medium, which shows a poor and incorrect mentality of a person managing a business not owned by him, but by the entire community. Mention should be made that there are more of such directors who want to apply the same treatment in taking revenge. Here we question the mentality of the commercial sector without generalizing this theme, but the press as well as commerce carry great responsibility as leading sources in the community and any incorrect act which does not coincide with their role and responsibility in the community, must be submitted to the community's scrutiny and judgement and if the press must do this, it should be done without the intimate relationship being endangered.

How many times has the press been intimidated because of verified information, but hurt certain merchants and they then refrain from advertising in the press. Commerce demands and requests to have properly functioning media, but on the other hand we demand the same from the commercial sector.

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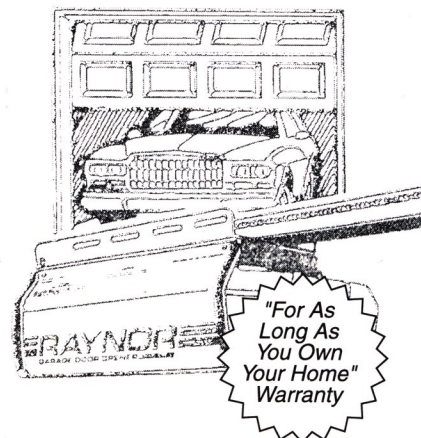
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